

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

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THE FOLLOWING TEL FROM MADRAS SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO
CALCUTTA AND MADRAS DTD JUL 20 IS RPTD

QUOTE

MADRAS 0747

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS/ PINT PINS IN

SUBJ: KERALA SITUATION

REF: NEW DELHI 8353

1.

POLITICAL: THE CRISIS THAT THREATENED THE KERALA COALITION
MINISTRY WAS AVERTED JUL 13 WHEN THE LIAISON COMMITTEE OF THE
RULING PARTIES DEFERRED DECISION ON THE FOLLOWING ISSUES CONFRONTING
THE MINISTRY

A. CONGRESS/MUSLIM LEAGUE DISPUTE OVER PASSAGES IN A CONTROVERSIAL
TEXTBOOK "BHARATRATHNAM" BIOGRAPHY PF THE LATE NEHRU, PRESCRIBED
FOR THE 8TH STANDARD IN SCHOOLS KERALA EDUCATION MINISTRY
WHO IS A MUSLIM LEAGUER HAD ORDERED WITHDRAWAL OF THIS BOOK
FOR THE NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR AND EXPURGATION OF REMARKS IN IT
ALLEGEDLY REPUGNANT TO THE MUSLIM LEAGUE. THE CONGRESS

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PARTICULARLY ITS POWERFUL YOUTH AND STUDENT WINGS STRONGLY
OPPOSES THIS ACTION AND DEMANDED RESTORATION OF BOOK
AND RESINSTATMENT OF EXPURGATED PASSAGES. THE DISPUTE WAS
TEMPORARILY RESOLVED BY RETURING TO THE STATUS QUO. THE

CONGRESS WILL NOT DEMAND WITHDRAWAL OF EXPURGATED PASSAGES IN THE BOOK AND THE LEAGUE WILL NOT DEMAND ITS TITAL WITHDRAWAL THE LIAISON COMMITTEE WILL DECIDE LATER WHETHER THIS BOOK SHOULD CONTINE IN THE CIRRICULUM.

B. ISSUE RELATING TO THE TITANIUM COMPLEX AND LETTER OF INTENT ISSUED TO A PRIVATE MONOPOLY. THE HOUSE OF THAPAERS THE VONGRESS STAND ON THIS ISSUE IS THE COMPLEX SHOULD BE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR AND THE LETTER OF INTENT ISSUED TO THAPARS SHOULD BE CANCELLED THE CONGRESS ALSO ACCUSED THE CPI INDUSTRIES MINISTER T V THOMAS OF ENCOURAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR. THE CPI RETORTED THAT THE GOI ISSUED THE LETTER OF INTENT TO THE HOUSE OF THAPAR THE LIAISON COMMITTEE DECIDED THIS ISSUE SHOULD BE RESOLVED BY THE SPATE CABINET.

C. ISSUE OVER PERMISSION GIVEN TO KUTTANAD FARMERS TO SELL THEIR SURPLUS RICE IN THE OPEN MARKET AT RS 2/10 PER KILO THE CONGRESS ALLEGED THIS AMOUNT WAS PROFITEERING (CONTROL PRICE IS RS 1/80 PER KILO) AND CRITICISED THE CPI CHIEF MINISTER FOR PERMITTING THIS SALE INCOLLUSION WITH THE CONGRESS FOOD MINISTER. THE ISSUE WILL BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE LIAISON COMMITTE ON JULY 24/25.

2. THE ABOVE ISSUES REMAIN UNRESOLVED SINCE A TEMPORAY TRUCE

BETWEEN THE DISPUTING PARTIES COULD BECOME UNRAVELED AT ANY TIME IT IS APPARENT THE CONGRESS WAS FORCED TO AGREE TO A TEMPORARY SETTLEMENT AS A RESULT OF THE DIRECTIVE FROM DELHI THAT THE MINISTRY SHALL NOT BE TOPPLED AT THIS JUNCTURE. WITH THE FOOD DISUTION REMAINING TIGHT THE FALL OF THE MINISTRY OVER A

SCHOOL TEXTBOOOK AND OTHER SMALL ISSUES WOULD HAVE EXPOSED THE KPCC TO CHARGES OF IRRESPONSIBILITY AND DONE INCALCULABLE HARM POLITICALLY TO THE PARTY. MOREOVER THE CENTER FACED WITH DIFFICULTIES IN SEVERAL CONGRESS RULED STATES AND WITH ELECTION DUE SHORTLY IN SOME OF THE KEY STATES COULD ILL AFFORD HAVING ANOTHER STATE COME UNDER PRESIDENT RULE.

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3. THE RECENT CIRIS IN THE KERALA COUALITION SURFACED SIMMERING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AND AMONG THE MINISTERIAL AND ORGANISATIONAL WINGS OF THE CONGRESS. DISPUTES BETWEEN THE CONGRESS MINISTERS AND TTHE KPCC LEADERSHIP AT THE KPCC MEETING BECAME HEATED AND REPORTEDLY EVEN LED KERALA FOOD MINISTER PAUL P MANI TO OFFER TO RESIGN. THE ORGANIZATIONAL WING CONTROLLED BY THE POWERFUL YOUTH AND STUDENT WINGS ACCUSED THE CONGRESS MINISTERS OF BYPASSING THE PARTY AND CHARGED THEM WITH INEFFICIENCY. THE MINISTERS WERE THREATENED WITH A RESHUFFLE IF NOT A COMPLETE REPLACEMENT OF THE PRESENT TEAM. FINALLY THE ORGANIZATION WINGS VIEW PREVAILED AND IT WAS DECIDED THE CONGRESS MINISTERS SHOULD CONSULT AND TAKE THE ADVICE OF THE KPCC PRESIDENT

ON ALL POLICY DECISION.

4. THE YOUTH CONGRESS WHICH CONTROLS THE KPCC HAS NEVER RECONCILED THE PARTY'S JOINING THE CPI LED COALITION AND BY RAISING CONTROVERSIES BETWEEN THE CONGRESS AND OTHER RULING PARTNERS CONTINUE THEIR ATTEMPTS TO FORCE THE CONGRESS TO QUIT THE MINISTRY. THE PRESTIGE OF THE CONGRESS REMAINS LOW IN KERALA AND THE RECENT COMPROMISE ENFORCED BY DELHI MAY FURTHER ENCOURAGE THE RADICAL ELEMENTS TO ROSE A CRISIS ON OTHER ISSUES. THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF ALL THESE DEVELOPMENTS ON THE CONGRESS IS THAT IT IS DIVIDED. THE RADICALS NO LONGER LOOK UPON THE CONGRESS MINISTERS AS IDEOLOGICAL REPS IN THE COALITION AND THE MINISTERS REMAIN ANNOYED WITH THE RADICALS. THE SCHISM IN THE CONGRESS IS EXPECTED TO PERSIST AND THE STABILITY OF THE COALITION WILL REMAIN THREATENED.

5. FOOD SITUATION. FOOD SITUATION IN KERALA IS TIGHT JULY AND AUGUST ARE ALWAYS LEAN MONTHS AND THE STATE GOVERNMENT HAS DECLARED 164 COASTAL VILLAGES IN EIGHT DISTRICTS AS FAMINE AREAS. PARTS OF ALLEPPEY DISTRICT ARE THE WORST AFFECTED WITH FIFTY VILLAGES SHORT OF FOOD. AGAINST THE RICE RATION HAS BEEN REDUCED STATEWIDE AND THERE HAS BEEN NO COMPENSATORY INCREASE IN THE SUPPLY OF WHEAT. IN TRADITIONALLY FOODGRAIN DEFICIT KERALA RELIEF CAN ONLY COME FROM THE CENTER. IN A MEETING WITH AN ALL PARTY DELEGATION HEADED BY KERALA CHIEF MINISTER C. ACHUTHA MENON IN NEW DELHI JUL 19 MR FAKHRUDDIN AL AHMED UNION MIN FOR AGRICULTURE AGREED TO SUPPLY KERALA WITH AN ADDITIONAL 10,000 TONS OF FOODGRAINS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOR JULY AND CONSIDER INCREASING THE TOTAL ALLOTMENT FOR AUGUST A PLEA FROM THE KERALA DELEGATION TO THE PRIME MINISTER TO TOUR THE FAMINE STRICKEN AREAS. REPORTEDLY DREW FROM HER THE REPLY QTE WILL MY VISIT PRODUCE RICE: UNQTE AS IT STANDS NOW DESPITE THE PMS RATHER ILL TEMPERED REJOINER KERALA SHOULD BE ABLE TO MEET ITS PRESENT RATION REQUIREMENTS 4 OUNCES OF RICE AND 3 OUNCES OF WHEAT PER DAY IF THE CENTER CAN PROVIDE THE PROMISED AMOUNT OF FOODGRAINS FOR JULY/AUGUST. COME MID SEPTEMBER THE NEW RICE CROP WILL BE IN EASING THE SITUATION ALL AROUND.

6. PUBLIC ORDER: WHILE THE GENERAL LAW AND ORDER SITUATION IN KERALA CONTINUES TO REMAIN UNDER CONTROL A FURTHER DETERIORATION OF THE FOOD SITUATION COULD CAUSE THE SITUATION TO CHANGE RAPIDLY. ALREADY VARIOUS OPPOSITION PARTIES AND STUDENT GROUPS HAVE PICKETED DISTRICT OFFICES DEMANDING THE GOI SUPPLY MORE FOODGRAINS. THE KERALA GOVERNMENT TAKE STERN ACTION AGAINST HOARDERS AND BLACKMARKETERS OF FOODGRAINS. SOME STUDENT GROUPS LED BY THE CPM RECENTLY ATTACKED FOODGRAIN SHOPS AND GODOWNS WHERE FOODGRAINS WERE STORED AND DISTRIBUTED THEM TO THE PUBLIC AT GOVERNMENT

CONTROLLED PRICES. AS A RESULT THE GIVERNMENT PROMPTLY COLSED
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS THROUGHOUT THE STATE TO PRECENT STUDENT
UNREST FROM SPEADING. OTHER AGITATION ON THE FOOD ISSUE
ARE EXPECTED IN THE COMING WEEKS.

7. NOTEWORTHY DEVEOPMENTS IN OTHER STATES WILL BE FORWARDED
SEPARATELY REF RECEIVED JULY 20.
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